

EPCSA EXTRA

European Port Community Systems Association



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OPENING THE WINDOW ON PORT COMMUNITY SYSTEMS



Europe is home to the most efficient Port Community Systems in the world – and they will play a vital role in the European Community’s aspirations for trade facilitation through a Single Window.

That was the clear message from speakers at ‘The Added Dimension’, the inaugural conference and launch of the European Port Community Systems Association, held at the World Customs Organization in Brussels in June.

Six leading Port Community System Operators have come together for the first time to form EPCSA, and the new association was welcomed by a series of influential speakers at the Brussels event.

“Port Community Systems indeed are an area where we were missing an association,” said Manuela Cabral, of DG Taxud. She described the creation of EPCSA as ‘perfect timing’ and thanked the members ‘for the idea and the courage to launch this organisation’.

Jukka Savo, of DG Move, said the EC ‘very much favoured’ Port Community Systems and

supported the further use and sharing of data. “We are asking industry what we need to do to make the sector work more easily,” he said.

Port Community Systems were described as ‘vital in the interaction between Customs and the business of the port’ by Gareth Lewis, of the World Customs Organization. He said: “We have a long appreciation of Port Community Systems and, as Single Window systems develop, we are going to ensure to a maximum degree we can that there is integration with the work that they do.”

The final speaker at the conference, Markus Pikart, from UNECE, said: “We from the UN think it is very important that Port Community Systems have an association. We have worked with some of the members in the past and we are looking to continue to work with you and in particular through your association.”

The six founding members of EPCSA are SOGET (France), dbh (Germany), Maritime Cargo Processing (UK), Portbase

(Netherlands), PORTIC (Spain) and DAKOSY (Germany).

EPCSA’s mission is to influence public policy in the European Union level in order to achieve e-logistics throughout all European ports, operating as a key element of the EU maritime, shipping and logistics industry.

Its members are well placed to provide expert opinion, advice and assistance – because when it comes to ‘e-challenges’, Port Community System operators frequently have the experience to provide the solution.

As well as the formal start of EPCSA, ‘The Added Dimension’ event included the launch of the association’s White Paper, ‘The role of Port Community Systems in the implementation of National Single Window’. This document brings together information and input from all of the EPCSA members and is considered a milestone in terms of moving forward maritime and logistics IT developments.

“The White Paper considers how we as Port Community System Operators in Europe can save

money for the EC, for member states, and for trade in supporting the Single Window developments,” said EPCSA chairman Pascal Ollivier, from SOGET. “We have to realise that Europe is home to the most efficient Port Community Systems in the world.”

However, we warned, B2B should never be placed under state control and should stay out of the scope of NSW (National Single Window). “That is a very important statement. It will ensure that new technologies enter the logistics sector and are implemented as quickly as possible, and that Europe remains the market leader in global logistics know-how.”

Very often there isn’t a common understanding of what a Port Community System is or does, delegates heard. Many would be surprised to know how long PCSs have been around – for more than three decades. Until now, the roles, benefits and objectives of the PCS have not been appreciated. As an association, EPCSA will work to change that.

EPCSA: OUR OBJECTIVES

EPCSA has set out clear objectives and will work towards these through four distinct committees.

- Standards and Technology, chaired by Portbase.
- Business Applications, with the focus on Single Window, chaired by DAKOSY.
- Customs and Other Government Agencies (OGAs), chaired by Maritime Cargo Processing.
- European Port Community System developments, chaired by Richard Morton.

EPCSA: THE DETAILS

Port Community Systems are at the very heart of the maritime, shipping and logistics industry. The electronic platforms they provide, enabling intelligent and secure exchange of information, represent the vital cog in the smooth transport and logistics operations that drive day-to-day trade across Europe.

The establishment of the European Port Community Systems Association gives Port Community Systems a common lobbying position at the European Union.

EPCSA's mission is to influence public policy in the European Union level in order to achieve e-Logistics throughout all European ports, operating as a key element of the EU maritime, shipping and logistics industry.

Europe is developing a number of initiatives and Directives such as e-Customs, e-Freight and e-Maritime. EPCSA members will:

- Explain to EU institutions and others the central role of Port Community Systems in facilitating trade and applying new regulations at Customs and maritime level.
- Provide an important source of expert opinion with regard to any new Directive being considered and give support in the practical implementation of EC policy.
- Help to save the EC time, money and effort by creating a picture of what is already possible.
- Develop papers, consultations and surveys to develop a robust evidence base covering the key aspects of e-Maritime.



EPCSA LAUNCH 'PERFECT TIMING'

"We are at the starting point of something extremely interesting," Manuela Cabral of DG Taxud told delegates at the EPCSA conference.

"Future challenges [for Europe] include the Modernised Customs Code and the Reporting Formalities Directive," said the Customs expert. "Together these will lead to a further degree of harmonisation." Until now, she said Port Community Systems were an area where 'we were missing an association', and she described the formation of EPCSA as 'perfect timing'.

"Here in the EC we understand that there are different national realities but it is difficult for the EC to get an overview of what is happening in this area of Port Community Systems; we have been in a situation where we are involved in Single Window developments but there was an absence of a contributor to the debate.



Manuela Cabral

"We are at a really good moment to launch EPCSA. This should allow us to move at a faster speed in the non-traditional Customs area."

The Single Window concept needs to be planned 'in the best possible way', said Ms Cabral. "Within the

steps towards Single Window are a huge amount of requirements. To achieve the right result will require identification of existing requirements in all policies relating to external trade, and identification of all underlying documents.

FACING UP TO FUTURE GROWTH

The volume of containers handled in Europe's main ports is expected to reach 145 million teu by 2025 – compared with about 85 million teu in 2007.

Port calls will rise to roughly 1.9 million in 2025, and trade growth is expected to rise by 400-800% by 2050.

These dramatic figures were presented at the conference by Jukka Savo, who is responsible for maritime transport policy/ports and inland waterways, at DG Move.

"The EU economy is one of the most open in the world," he said. "The future prosperity of our continent will depend on the ability of all of its regions to remain part of a fully integrated world economy."

The transport industry itself is an important part of the economy, he added; in the EU, it directly employs around 10 million people and accounts for 5% of GDP.

"Many European companies are world leaders in infrastructure, logistics, manufacturing of transport equipment and traffic management systems."

However, the other important part of the picture is that fuel costs and congestion levels are expected to rise significantly by 2030, said Mr Savo. "To meet the challenges, transport has to use less energy and use cleaner energy. And it has to exploit efficiently a multimodal, integrated and 'intelligent' network."

The performance of multimodal logistics chains must be

optimised, including by making greater use of more energy-efficient modes, he said.

Key EU targets include the shift of 30% of road freight over 300 km to other modes by 2030 – and shifting more than 50% by 2050. There should be a fully functional and EU-wide multimodal TEN-T 'core network'. And, finally, by 2050 all seaports should be linked to rail freight and, where possible, inland waterway system.

The titles of successive White Papers illustrate the developing theme, he added. In 2001, the focus was 'Modal Shift'. In 2006, it was 'Co-modality'. And in 2011, the focus is 'Full Modal Integration'.

In tackling the 'How to do it' question, he outlined four 'I's.

- **Internal market:** creating a genuine Single European Transport Area by eliminating all residual barriers between modes and national systems, including the e-Maritime initiative for paperless and intelligent shipping.
- **Innovation:** EU research needs to address the full cycle of research, innovation and deployment in an integrated way.
- **Infrastructure:** EU transport infrastructure policy needs a common vision and sufficient resources. The costs of transport should be reflected in its price in an undistorted way.
- **International:** Opening up Third Country markets in transport

services, products and investments continues to have high priority.

Referring to the role of the Port Community System, he said: "It is very much in our interests to build up information technologies."

He added: "The EC is very much favouring Port Community Systems and supporting the further use and sharing of data. Our purpose is facilitation. It isn't to build new regulations or legislation – rather, we are asking industry what we need to do to make the sector work more easily."

Jukka Savo



EMPHASIS ON WORKING TOGETHER

Single Window is one of the biggest challenges facing Customs administrations, said Gareth Lewis, of the World Customs Organization.

He highlighted the vital role that Port Community Systems play in the interaction between Customs and the business of the port, and said: "We have a long appreciation of Port Community Systems and, as Single Windows develop, we are going to ensure to a maximum

degree we can that there is integration with the work that Port Community Systems do."

In parallel with the major issues associated with Single Window development, Port Community Systems are complex too, said Mr Lewis. "While there are clearly significant areas of integration between the two, I am not going to pretend that the business of Customs and ports are completely aligned! Clearly, there are different

issues and priorities. But there is an intersection where our business interests are interlinked."

The world doesn't stand still and priorities must be reviewed; the increase of world trade volumes, the problem of intellectual property violation and the need for urgent humanitarian relief operations all impact on Customs authorities, he said.

While Coordinated Border Management (CBM) is seeing the

world of Customs 'stepping outside its comfort zone', it makes sense if various border agencies are working together in coordination and cooperation, he said. "It is about better collaboration."

"The way that we see CBM, it is logical that the World Customs Organization should be the coordinating agency for this collaboration."

Single Window is one of the 'absolute keys', said Mr Lewis.



ELIMINATING MOUNTAINS AND MISTAKES

From mountains of paper and 30% mistakes to one-time submission and re-use of information, and coordinated control: this was the way in which Markus Pikart of UNECE summed up what the Single Window concept can achieve.

The UN Recommendation 33 recommends governments to establish Single Window for cross-border trade, he said, and he outlined the features defined in the Recommendation: one-time submission of standardised information and documents, sharing of information amongst government agencies, coordinated controls and inspections of the various governmental authorities,

allowing payment of duties and other charges and providing a source of trade-related government information.

Mr Pikart, who discussed in his presentation how data requirements and documents could be standardised country to country, also highlighted the role that Port Community Systems play in trade facilitation. He welcomed the formation of the association and invited EPCSA to attend a UN global conference on Single Window to be held in Geneva in December.

Organised under the UN Joint Network for Trade Facilitation, the conference, entitled 'Transforming Global Trade: Single Windows and Global Supply

Chains in the Next Decade', will consider what has been achieved, what works and what does not, what could the agendas for the next ten years, which technologies will shape Single Window developments, and what are the future concepts.

"The Single Window is essentially a political/organisation concept to simplify the exchange of information between trade and government; enhance collaboration between government agencies – Customs, agriculture, health, etc – in a country; facilitate procedures and enhance competitiveness; foster regional and global integration; and implement latest standards and technologies for e-Business," said Mr Pikart.



Markus Pikart

WHITE PAPER: OUTLINING A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

The launch of EPCSA's White Paper, 'The role of PCSs in the implementation of National Single Window', was the 'top news of the day', said EPCSA chairman Pascal Ollivier.

"All four speakers have talked about the issues and challenges and implications of Single Window; our White Paper explains how we, as PCS operators in Europe, can save money for the EC, for member states, and for trade in supporting the Single Window developments," he said. "We have to realise that Europe is home to the most efficient Port Community Systems in the world."

Mr Ollivier, of SOGET, emphasised that Port Community Systems are the most advanced method for the exchange of information within the single or national port community infrastructure. "It isn't only a significant exchange of information – it is an intelligent exchange of information," he said. As such, the vision is of a strategic alliance between Port Community Systems and Single Window.

Although the earliest Port Community Systems date back more than three decades, still there are a number of countries and/or ports in Europe which don't have such a system in operation, said Mr Ollivier.

"Part of the e-Maritime initiative of DG Move is to move from today's situation where 40 ports have PCSs in place, to a situation where PCSs are in place in more than 200 ports. Where no automated systems are in place, we believe that PCSs are ideally placed to provide the foundation or backbone of Single Window when we have to start from scratch. In this way, PCSs can be seen as the gateway to the National Single Window concept."

While EPCSA will be open to new members and associate members within Europe, there are no plans to expand its geographical reach beyond Europe, said Mr Ollivier. "In a world where Asia is growing twice as fast as Europe, we want Europe to remain home to the most efficient PCSs in the world."

The six members of EPCSA between them handle, on average, over one million electronic transactions a day, said EPCSA secretary general Richard Morton. A key role of EPCSA will be ensuring that any Directives or policy decisions do not duplicate what is already happening out there on the ground, he said.

"E-solutions are nothing new – they have been in operation for more than 30 years. But perhaps Port Community Systems have not been good at going out and promoting what they do."

Bringing together six major Port Community System operators from Europe for the benefit of Europe was a major achievement, added Mr Morton. "Our vision is about supporting Europe and simplifying procedures and avoiding duplication. It is about influencing public policy at the EU level, using our very broad experience. Our website is up and running [www.epcsa.eu] and we have launched our White Paper. Communication is key."



EPCSA MEMBERSHIP



EPCSA has three distinct membership categories: Founding Members, Members and Associate Members. The association is now accepting applications for Associate Membership, and these will be considered by the Executive Committee.

Founding Members

There are six Founding Members – these are the original Port Community System Operators that formed EPCSA and signed the agreement to form a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG). The Founding Members make up the Executive Committee, and are responsible for EPCSA's organisation and operation.

Members

Full Membership will be open only to Port Community System Operators. Applicants must first have been an EPCSA Associate Member for a full calendar year.

Associate Members

Associate Membership of EPCSA is open to Port Community System Operators and Port Authorities wishing to implement a PCS. European or international associations with relevance should contact EPCSA to discuss membership eligibility.



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